

Amendments to the Claims

Please **cancel claims 1-3** without prejudice.

Please **add claims 4-6** as follows:

4. (New) A system for identifying and protecting assets, the system comprising:
 - a central register comprising:
 - an assets database configured to store registered assets; and
 - a protection elements database operatively connected to the assets database and configured to store a plurality of protection elements, wherein said protection elements comprise at least one of an encapsulated microchip and an identification microdot;
 - a plurality of registration terminals operatively connected to the protection elements database, each of said registration terminals configured to retrieve one or more protection elements from the protection elements database and to register a selected asset by applying the one or more retrieved protection elements to one or more locations associated with the selected asset; and
 - a plurality of verification terminals accessible by authorized personnel and operatively connected to the assets database, said verification terminals configured to search the assets database for an input protection element.
5. (New) The system of claim 4 wherein each verification terminal includes a protection element reader configured to read the input protection element.

6. (New) The system of claim 4 wherein each registration terminal includes application equipment configured to apply the retrieved protection element to the one or more locations associated with the selected asset.